



Issue 4

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Volume 13

President's Letter

I saw a video the other day where a woman said that a person will find you talking about your genealogy either extremely interesting or extremely painful – and nothing in between. I laughed. My daughter falls into the latter camp. She finds it excruciatingly painful! All I can say is, I am glad I found this group – folks that don't think I am totally off my rocker for trying to find a relative who was born in 1750!

Over the summer I had two of my Dunham cousins come to visit. I hadn't seen them in many years. I had spent time filling in their family trees and plugged the laptop into the big screen TV to show them their family trees on ancestry.com. They were excited and very interested. It was fun and I was glad I put in the work to be able to share this with them.

I talked with them about the DNA testing that can be done and they both want to have their DNA tested – they are women so we would do the family finder DNA test. This would be used to test against other distant relatives we have from New Brunswick Canada so we can try to triangulate in on our common ancestors that we share.

And now I will close with my quarterly public service announcement. ☺ If you have any stories to share – please take the time to write something up for the newsletter and share it with all of us. We do fall into that “excited to hear about it” camp!

And I promise to share a bit of the work I have been doing as well. I have been tracking down more Dunhams from Deer Isle Maine and have some things to share. And as I alluded to previously, several of my distant cousins from New Brunswick, Canada have banded together to do autosomal DNA testing to find our common ancestors. Please look for an article or two from me in our next newsletter.

Jeffrey M. Dunham, President

Finding Abraham Donham - The Importance of Being There

by Perry Donham

August 2016

One of the joys of being a Donham is that there are so many of us; the family has been in North America since the 1600s, and that has given us plenty of time to colonize and grow. Thanks to the notoriety of a few of our early ancestors there's been significant work on our family lines by genealogists such as Isaac Watson Dunham, Gratia Mahony, Scott Trimble, and DNA work by Doug Wilson, Paul Dunham, and so many others.

The hard work of those genealogists is augmented by the ease with which we can now search for historical records right from our couch using services like ancestry.com and Family Search. Many budding family historians dive into this vast ocean of information and start clicking madly, building up enormous family trees with hardly any effort, believing that they have discovered everything there is to know about their family history.

At some point those who are serious about documenting the past realize the importance of primary sources. For me it was about two years ago when I realized that my tree of a few thousand individuals was constructed almost entirely from sources that read: "Ancestry.com Family Tree". I'd assumed that the members of ancestry.com were always right, blindly adding entire branches to my tree without really checking to see if they were valid.

It was DNA that rescued me from the Ancestry Abyss. A few years ago I read about the DNA work being done by the Dunham-Singletary Family Connections Association, and ordered a kit. Those results placed me squarely into the Jonathan Singletary / Dunham line and started a conversation with Doug Wilson, manager of the Singletary DNA project at Family Tree, about where I fit in relation to a few others in his study that

were not yet placed. I confidently sent over my pedigree showing an unbroken line all the way back to Richard Singletary.

Except that it wasn't unbroken. The line from colonial times had been well documented by Walton, Trimble, and Mahony, and David Lee Dunham, among others, from Richard Singletary, leading up to Ira Donham (b. 1817). From my end looking backward, I had a solid paper trail up to my great-grandfather Mack Donham. The trouble was that, while I thought I knew who Mack's father was, based on family information, I had no source apart from a few ancestry.com family trees to prove it. Based on geography and time frame I had a fair circumstantial case, and at the very least a small handful of Donham candidates to be Mack's father.

Here's the problem. Mack Donham was born in December of 1880; the federal census was recorded in the summer of that year, and so he was not listed in his father's household. Birth records in his place of birth, Indiana, were not required or recorded before 1882. The 1890 federal census, which would likely have placed him in his father's home as a 9-year-old was, to our collective chagrin, destroyed by fire in Washington, DC. Mack does appear in the 1900 census, but as a 19-year-old married and living in a new home with his bride. Nothing in the set of documents available to me online could make a definite connection; I know this because I spent a good year and a half clicking and searching to no avail.

There were moments of near-triumph. In the spring of 2016 the State of Indiana began to release digitized death certificates dating back to 1900 or so. While clicking and searching one evening a death certificate for a Mack Donham appeared...surely it would list his father's name! I quickly opened the document and scanned down to the line listing parents...to see a single line drawn through the boxes for mother and father.

Finally, a month later, a clue emerged in the form of the death certificate for Abraham M Donham, the man I had long assumed was Mack's father. Burned once, I opened the file and took it in. Abraham's father was listed and was who I believed him to be. The birth and death date in my record were confirmed, too. And then, on the bottom line of the form, in the box labeled Informant: Mack Donham. While not exactly a notarized birth

certificate, it was the first indication that Mack and Abraham were at all connected and it gave me hope.

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INDIANA STATE BOARD OF HEALTH
 COUNTY OF Warrick 1879 **CERTIFICATE OF DEATH**
 Registered No. 421

NAME OF DECEASED Abraham M. Donham
 PLACE OF DEATH St. Anthony's Ward 1
 CITY OF Indianapolis (See St. Anthony's St. Anthony's)
 DECEASED'S RESIDENCE Indianapolis
 DATE OF DEATH May 25 1917
 I HEREBY CERTIFY, that I attended deceased from July 1 1916 to May 25 1917
 that I last saw him alive on May 25 1917
 and that death occurred, on the date stated above, at 10:00
 The CAUSE OF DEATH was as follows:
Heart failure
 Contributory Central embolism
 Signed St. F. P. P. P. M. D.
May 25 1917 Address St. Anthony's
 LENGTH OF RESIDENCE (For hospitals, institutions, or places of residence)
 At place of death 1 in the St. Anthony's
 If not at place of death, St. Anthony's
 Name of St. Anthony's
 PLACE OF BURIAL OR REMOVAL St. Anthony's DATE OF BURIAL May 27 1917
 UNDERTAKER St. Anthony's
 SIGNED Mack Donham
 ADDRESS St. Anthony's
 DATE May 26 1917

Abraham Donham's death certificate, showing Mack Donham as the informant.

The vast majority of genealogical records do not exist online. No one has digitized or indexed or in any way recorded these bits of information; they exist only in the offices and drawers and libraries in which they were collected. At some point in your family search you have to get up off of the couch and go to those records. This was my moment.

I live in Massachusetts, not far from where Richard Singletary settled over 350 years ago. I grew up, though, in Indiana, where Donhams were thick on the ground in the 19th and 20th centuries. I hadn't been back for 25 years, but I packed my bags and headed for southern Indiana in hope of finding a link between Abraham and Mack.

My first stop was Vincennes, Indiana, which is near the towns of Linton and Bicknell. I knew that both Abraham and Mack had lived and died near there, and I thought that I might find some trace of them. I started with a full day in the excellent Knox County Library historical research library

located in the historic McGrady Brockman House, an old funeral home turned into a research center. I'd never done this level of research before and was fascinated by so many loosely bound volumes, hand-typed on onionskin paper 100 years before by people just as interested in family history as I am.

Chambers, Elizabeth wife of Joseph Chambers died Nov 10 1853 aged 71 yrs 5 ms 11 ds
 Chambers, Samuel born Nov 8 1810 died Sept 18 1853 aged 79yrs 10m 10ds
 Chambers, Emily N. born Aug 7 1832 died May 4 1853 aged 20yrs 3m 23ds.
 Chambers, John died Jan 31 1865 aged 73 yrs & 15 d's.
 Chambers, Nancy wife of J. Chambers died Dec 8 1860 aged 67 yrs 11 m's 15 d's
 Chambers, Thos. 1st Lieut. Co C. 80th Reg Ind Vol died in Elizabethtown, Ky. Apr 9 1863 aged 42 yrs 3 mo 23 d's
 Chambers, Samuel E. died Mar 28 1865 aged 47 yrs 1 mo 7 das.
 Chambers, Charles son of S. E. & M. A. Chambers died Feb 1 1864 aged 3ys 3mo 2days
 Chambers, Maria J. daughter of Eliz. & S. A. Chambers died Mar 14th 1848 age 3 m 23 days.
 Chambers, Maggie (comes under Dellinger name.)
 Chambers, Rosa B. dau of A.B. & M. Chambers died Oct 11 1862 aged 7yrs 1mo 23ds
 Chambers, Johnathan M. son of L. & R. Chambers born June 24 1855 d. Oct 10 1865
 Chambers, John Co. E. 61 Ind Inf. (Government stone. No dates)
 Chambers, Bennet S. son of J.L. & E. Chambers d. Dec 22 1874 aged 25yrs 1 mo 10ds
 (The eight following all on one shaft - broken, defaced, unreadable)
 Chambers, Alexander born June 22 1810 died July 20 1866
 Chambers, Rachel Keith wife of Alex. Chambers born Oct 4 1818 died Feb 5 1866
 Chambers, Ophelia wife of J. N. Chambers born April 11th 1835 died Oct 26 1875
 Chambers, Andemias born Mar 7 1839 } No dates of deaths of these two.
 Chambers, Lettie T. born Nov 27 1847 }
 Chambers, Shingtor(?) born 1840 died 1844
 Chambers, Melinda T. born 1843 died 1844
 Chambers, Alex (Dates all gone)
 Collins, Mary E. born Jan 22 1853 died Sep 2 1854
 Couchman, Eliza J. consort of Thos. Couchman died April 24 1857 age 25yrs 6m 17d
 Couchman, Thomas died May 6 1862 age 34yrs 6mo & 7da
 Dellinger, Maggie Chambers wife of W. A. Dellinger born Sept 22 1852 died Jan 31 1875 aged 22 yrs 4 ms 9 dys
 Donham, Ira born Oct 13 1817 Married Dec 27 1839 died July 2 1902
 Donham, Cintha born Mar 11 1823 died Feb 2 1892
 Donham, Susan dau of Ira & Cynthia Donham died Oct 6 1873 aged 23yrs
 Ford, Fannah M. dau of S.&P. Ford of Avon, Ohio died Sep 25 1859
 Frazo, Sarah wife of L. Frazo died Feb 1 1866 aged 32 yrs 5 m 1 d
 Gaywood, Sarah consort of M. E. Gaywood born Jan 2 1804 died Jan 1 1859
 entry, A. P. died Aug 2 1859 Age 45 yrs. (Confederate soldier.)

Let me take a moment to thank the Gods of Genealogy for the indexers. These individuals go through enormous books, sometimes in the thousand-page range, and tediously create an index of names and places where none existed before. Or, they assemble graveyard transcriptions recorded by small knots of volunteers and index them by name and date. We benefit enormously from this work!

From my research at Knox County Library I was able to determine the cemetery in which Mack and his wife were buried, and the next day I visited Fairview Cemetery in Linton,

Many records link this one exist as a single hand-Typed copy and are not available online.

Indiana to see the simple stone marker above their graves. That same day, led by my research, I traveled a few miles down the road to Chambers Cemetery, a small plot surrounded by corn fields, where I visited the grave of my 3rd-great grandparents Ira and Cynthia Donham, along with several other kin buried there.

Still no indication of where Abraham might be, though. I assumed that since both his father and presumed son were buried near Linton that he would be, too. The following day my first visit was to the Greene County Health Department which holds death records for the area. The clerks there get quite a few genealogy buffs looking for help and had no trouble finding the index for Abraham's wife, Sarelda, though nothing was listed for Abraham. The clerk printed a copy of the original death record

for Sarelda (for the princely sum of one dollar...I even got a receipt); one thing popped out immediately...Sarelda was buried in Fairview Cemetery, the same as Mack and his wife, Hortense. I'd spent a lot of time walking the cemetery, though, and hadn't seen a stone for any Donham except Mack and Hortense.

It was late in the day, and I decided to wait until the following morning to see if the cemetery manager might be in and available to help. She was, on both accounts. I described my problem, and that I knew Sarelda had been buried somewhere in the cemetery in 1917. The manager opened a file drawer and pulled out a large, musty volume of interment records, alphabetical for each year. We turned to 1917, looked under D, and, sure enough, there was the record for Sarelda. The plot number was the same as Mack's. I next asked to see the records for 1919, the year that Abraham died, and we quickly found his entry...in the same plot.

Name	Month	Day	Year	Plot	Remarks
Duchanoff, Mary	Oct	16	1914	41	
Dubney, Audrey Lee	Nov	29	1914	16	
Dodge, Howard	Dec	2	1914	29	
Dubois, Myrta	Dec	3	1915	2	
Dugan, Martin	Jan	3	1916	3	
Donham, Mack - <i>Sarelda</i>	July	28	1916	3	
Dunklin, Cornelius	July	21	1916	28	
Dunning, Edward	Dec	25	1917	21	
Duncan, Lex	Dec	27	1917	25	
Duhne, George	Jan	17	1917	27	
Duncan, Isaac	Jan	16	1917	17	
Donham, Abraham	May	28	1917	16	
Dunn, Mary	Sept	30	1917	28	
Dixon, Carl	Oct	3	1917	30	
Davis, Alex	Oct	31	1917	3	
Duhne, Mrs. A. M. E.	Jan	2	1918	31	
Doss, George	Feb	19	1918	2	
Dixon, Ann	Mar	3	1918	19	
Dunn, Anna	Mar	14	1918	3	
Dunn, Cecil	May	26	1918	14	
Davis, Chas	June	2	1918	14	

Entry in the interment record of Fairview Cemetery, Linton, Indiana, showing that Abraham Donham was buried in an unmarked grave in plot 206, next to his son Mack.

Abraham and Sarelda had been laid to rest in an unmarked grave directly next to Mack and his wife Hortense.

This is what I'd come from Massachusetts to Indiana for. While it isn't a notarized birth certificate, Abraham's death certificate with Mack's name affixed, plus the discovery of the two men laying side by side in Fairview Cemetery is enough, at least in my mind, to cement the father-son relationship between the two, especially with the backdrop of DNA evidence in hand. I would not have discovered this, or any of the several other connections I found on this trip, without going to where the records were. There simply is no substitute for fieldwork, especially when online searches can provide clues about what you are looking for.

I spent the afternoon of that day tromping through Oak Hill Cemetery in Riley, Indiana, where I documented nearly 40 Donham graves, including a pair of Nathaniels that had given me grief for years. It was a joyous endeavor despite the hot summer day.

The last two days of my trip were spent in the Indiana State Library's Genealogical Collection, where I found transcripts of Donham family bibles, clippings and stories dating back generations, and, of course, new avenues of research to explore.

The bottom line is that online searches can only take you so far. At some point you need to put your feet on the ground and actively seek out information. More than that, a genealogy can't be built on someone else's assumption...each connection in the tree must be mortared in place with supporting documentation. The clues are there, we simply need to go in the direction that they point.



The author at Oak Hill Cemetery, Riley, Indiana.

Perry Donham lives near Boston, Massachusetts, where he is a professor at Boston University. His family line from Jonathan Singletary Dunham¹ is Nathaniel², John³, Nathaniel Jr.⁴, William⁵, Ira⁶, Abraham⁷, Mack⁸, Carl McDowl⁹, Floyd Mack¹⁰. He can be reached at perry@donham.family.

A Rare Find:

Matilda Dunham's Autograph Book

by Gratia Dunham Mahony

A surprise email came to me this summer from a lady who had purchased a little autograph book at an auction in South Cairo, NY. This book was among some calligraphy items that this woman was interested in but the book itself was not one of them. Cydney Cornell, who had purchased the items, took the time to do a bit of research and to find someone who might have a family connection to Matilda Dunham, the original owner of the little book of autographs. Ms. Cornell found my name as editor of this newsletter, and sent me the email asking if I would be interested in the autograph book. Of course I replied that I was interested, that the book might be the subject of a newsletter article, and that I might be able to locate a descendant of the family to which Matilda belonged.

The Dunham-Singletary Family Connections newsletter, Volume 5, Issue 2 of April 15, 2008 contains two articles co-authored by Kirk L. Dunham and myself. The second article (p. 21-24) gives the genealogy of Kirk Dunham's family line, and lists Matilda Dunham as the sister of his ancestor David Lewis Dunham. Matilda Dunham was born in 1842, the daughter of David Ross and Mary Magdalene (Fatio) Dunham.

In 2008 Kirk L. Dunham, a member of DSFC, sent me some very interesting information about his family who were originally from Woodbridge, New Jersey, and who moved prior to the Civil War to St. Augustine, Florida. In a separate article in the April 15, 2008 newsletter the article (p. 6-20) *Painting an Historical Picture* a summary of the life of David ⁶ Dunham (1772-1823) is presented. David ⁶ was the son of Joseph ⁵, David ⁴ Nathaniel ³ Jonathan ² alias Singletary, Richard ¹ Singletary.

David ⁶ Dunham was baptized in Westfield, New Jersey 20 September 1772; died in April 1823 as the result of drowning in the Hudson River during a bad storm. David ⁶ Dunham was married at Trinity Church in New York City on 7 June 1794 to Miss Mary Shackerly. David ⁶ Dunham was a merchant in New York City and at the time of his death he was the owner of the steam ship **Robert Fulton**. An advertisement in the *New Bedford Mercury* newspaper issue of 13 June 1823 lists "The steam ship

Robert Fulton, was sold yesterday, at auction, by order of the Administrators of the estate of the late Mr. Dunham for \$25,900. The vessel was purchased by Henry Eckford, Esq."

The children of David ⁶ and Mary (Shackerly) Dunham were:

- i. Matilda ⁷ Dunham b. 1795
m. Reuben Withers
- ii. **David Ross ⁷ Dunham b. say 1797**
m. Mary Magdalene Fatio
- iii. Alfred ⁷ Dunham b. say 1799
- iv. Euphemia Cunningham ⁷ Dunham b. 5 September 1799
m. Daniel Chase Jackson
- v. Caroline ⁷ Dunham
- vi. Adeline Emma ⁷ Dunham
- vii. Mary S. ⁷ Dunham b. say 1802
m. Daniel S. Griswold
- viii. Sarah S. ⁷ Dunham
m. William C. Leffingwell
- ix. Nancy ⁷ Dunham b. about 1806; d. 1845 age 39

David Ross Dunham moves to Florida

About 1830 David Ross ⁷ Dunham, together with his mother the widow Mary (Shackerly) Dunham, moved to Florida and build a handsome home along the coast in New Smyrna. David Ross ⁷ married Mary Magdalene (Fatio) in 1831 in St. Augustine, Florida. In 1835 their mansion in New Smyrna was destroyed in an attack by the Wildcat Indians and the Dunhams moved to St. Augustine, Florida.

The children of David Ross ⁷ and Mary Magdalene (Fatio) Dunham were:

- i. Mary Louisa ⁸ Dunham b. 1833; d. 1895 unmarried
- ii. Fatio Dunham ⁸ b. 1835; d. 1874
- iii. Leonora Sophia ⁸ Dunham b. 1838; d. 1874
- iv. David Lewis ⁸ Dunham b. 1840; d. 1922

- v. Alfred ⁸ Dunham b. 1841; d. 1843
- vi. **Matilda ⁸ Withers Dunham** b. 1842
- vii. Henry Clay ⁸ Dunham b. 1844; killed in Civil War
- viii. Francis Philip Fatio ⁸ Dunham b. 1845; d. 1916 unmarried
- ix. Eliza Fredricka ⁸ Dunham b. 1849 (nicknamed California or Callie)

Military Career of David Lewis Dunham

David Lewis ⁸ Dunham was born in St. Augustine, Florida in 1840. He married Sara Lillie O'Hearn in 1874. The Civil War Service of David Lewis Dunham is given in Confederate Military History, Volume XI, p. 265:

"In April, 1861, he enlisted in Company, H of the Second Regiment Florida Infantry, and in the following July he went to Virginia in the rank of sargeant. After serving in camp at Richmond, the regiment was sent to Yorktown, where Sargeant Dunham, in the spring of 1862, participated in the fighting with McClellan's army. On the retreat to Richmond he was in battle at Williamsburg, May 5th, and on May 31—June 1, 1862, he was in the battle of Seven Pines, where ten of the eleven captains of the Second were killed or wounded, and of the 434 men, 34 were killed on the field, and the total casualties were 209. Next came the Seven Days' campaign, and at Frayser's Farm June 30th, he was severely wounded so that he was disabled in hospital and at home until October, 1862. Then he was promoted to second lieutenant of his company. He fought at Fredericksburg, December 11-13, 1862, and at the same place in the Chancellorsville campaign, May 1 - 5, 1863, acting in the latter battle as adjutant of his regiment, and receiving a slight wound in the foot. His next campaign was in Pennsylvania, and he was a gallant participant in the fighting of the second and third days of Gettysburg, until captured on Cemetery Hill, July 3, 1863. This ended his active service on the field, but he remained true to the Confederacy during many tedious months of suffering and privation at Johnson's Island, Lake Erie. Being released February 1865, he came to Florida and undertook the recruitment of a regiment, being so engaged when the war came to an end. Since then Lieutenant Dunham has been a resident of St. Augustine and prominent in social and official life. He was assessor of St. John's County, 1876-82, and tax collector from 1886 until his resignation in 1889, and in 1895, was

appointed clerk of the circuit court, an office to which he was elected in 1896 for a term of four years.”

Matilda ⁸ Dunham Owner of the Autograph Book

Matilda ⁸ Dunham was born in St. Augustine, Florida in 1842, daughter of David Ross ⁷ and Mary Magdalene (Fatio) Dunham, and sister of David Lewis ⁷ Dunham discussed above. The first autographs were dated in May of 1861 and the place given as Apalachicola, Florida. The book appeared to be used frequently up until about May of 1862. Matilda’s family home was in St. Augustine, so we might speculate that the signatures from Apalachicola might be those of friends or classmates and perhaps she was attending an academy in that city. Autographs from 1862 are mostly dated from St. Augustine, so she had returned to her home by that year.

The historical events surrounding Matilda Dunham during the years when she kept the autograph book place her as the resident of a state that had already seceded from the Union by April 1861, and after the firing on Fort Sumter on 12 April 1861. We know that her brother, David Lewis ⁸ Dunham had enlisted in Company, H of the Second Regiment Florida Infantry

In April of 1861. It is thus interesting to read some of the verses in the book which reflect her support of the Confederate cause.

Autograph albums were very popular throughout the 19th century. They were usually signed by family and friends and often contained verses dedicated to the book’s owner. Often these little poems or personal sentiments were maudlin or poignant in nature. Sometimes there were even full page drawings in the books.

Matilda Dunham’s little tome, with its dark brown suede cover and gold-tooled script was printed by Hayes and Zell, Philadelphia. Below is a sampling of some of the sentiments from the book.

“Should thine eyes rest on this signature think on one, Think kindly as I shall of thee

Sincerely, Susan Clark

Apalachicola, Jany 31st 1861

To Miss Mattie Dunham, The Eastern Minstrel
Your gushing songs—your sweet and birdlike dower
Heard in the softened stillness of the night,
Have charmed me with such sweet and subtle power
As makes us grieve to see you take your flight.

Lizzie June 7th Apalachicola Florida 1861 Confederate
States of America

2nd ser: David L Dunham Virginia Regiment

Fatio Dunham 1st Sergt Fla Ind. Blues

Keep One Kind Thought For Me

In after years, when you recall
The days of pleasure past.
And think of joyous hours, that all,
Have flown away too fast:
If some forgotten air you hear,
Brings back past scenes to thee,
And sadly charms the listening ear,
Keep one kind thought for me.

C. Sebon Flushing C. S. A

David R. Dunham

Clerk of the Confederate States Court for the District of Florida

St. Augustine Fla.

July 4th 1861

To the Florida Independent Blues-

The last good-by is spoken
And you must have leave your homes

The last fond link is broken
To other lands you roam.

With willing hearts you leave us
Your country to defend
And gladly do you hasten
Your strength and life to lend.

Nor many hearts are growing
In Florida's old town
For friends who now are leaving
To him a laurel crown
You do not go unguarded
For prayers for you ascend
Each day and hour and moment
That God will you defend.

And when you rush to battle
And the () for your find
Oh! Think of your homes and altars
And the Girl you've left behind
So will a Heavenly Father
E'er shield and guard the Blues
And to our prayers for safety
His answer will diffuse.

Dec. 12th 1862

There are also several loose leaf notes in the book, probably put there in later years for safe keeping. One of those notes certifies the baptism of Florence Wallace Taylor, who was Matilda (Dunham) Taylor's daughter.

"This is to Certify that Florence Wallace Taylor was Baptized in Trinity Church, West Troy (now Watervliet) N. Y., Nov. 20, 1864, at which time the date of her Birth was recorded as July 26, 1864 and her parents as James B. and Matilda D. Taylor. The Sponsors were the Mother, Clarke Salisbury, David L. and Maria Louisa Dunham, and the officiating Clergyman the Rev. J. S. Saunders.

The above copied from the Records and signed by the present Rector of Trinity Parish, Watervliet, N.Y., Jan. 12, 1934.

(signed) Theodore Hayden"

Another loose leaf record kept in the book certifies the marriage of Matilda Dunham and is written on the stationery of St. Mark's Church, 10th St. and Second Ave., New York, as follows;

Dated Aug. 9th 1897

"This is to Certify that there appear on the Records of St. Mark's Church, NY City

Marriage of Jas. Brisbie Taylor

and

(Matilda) Withers Dunham

On Sunday Oct. 18th 1863 Attest copy Jas H. Lewis, Sexton and

Custodian of Records"

Searching for the DNA of Asa Dunham

by Gratia Dunham Mahony

Eric Stoltz, DSFC member and contributor to this newsletter, has just posted another article in his on-going series about the Dunhams of Maine to his web site. You can read his most recent article about The Asa Dunham Family of Norway and Paris, Maine at <http://stoltzfamly.us/tag/maine-in-1790/> and learn more about this family who moved to Maine from Plympton, Plymouth County Massachusetts.

Asa Dunham has been identified as the son of Sylvanus ⁵ and Rebecca (Crocker) Dunham, Israel ⁴, Eleazer ³, Joseph ², Deacon John ¹ Dunham. Asa and his wife, Lydia (Cobb) Dunham and three children were living in Plantation Number 4, Cumberland County, Maine by the time the 1790 census was taken. Ultimately Asa and Lydia had a total of ten children.

Asa Dunham was born in Plympton, Massachusetts on 25 January 1759 and he served during the Revolutionary War. Asa Dunham also saw service during the War of 1812, and in fact he died as a result of this service. Asa, together with his son Asa Dunham, had enlisted in the Company of Captain Bailey Bodwell [William Berry Lapham, Centennial history of Norway, Oxford County, Maine, 1786-1886, Portland, Me.: Brown, Thurston & Co., 1886] and together they were later transferred to the company of Captain Smith Elkins. From an affidavit of Jesse Howe, Asa Dunham died 7 October 1813 of a disorder contracted while in the service. Jesse Howe states "I went to Burlington the end of September to fetch him home and I procured his discharge, but he was so sick it was thought imprudent to move him and I went home and left him." Jesse Howe had married Lydia Dunham, the oldest daughter of Asa and Lydia (Cobb) Dunham.

Project to Identify and Honor Vermont's 19th century War Dead

A project has been underway for several years to learn the identity of twenty human remains uncovered in Burlington Vermont's Old North End. Many of these remains are thought to be of soldiers who died from wounds or from disease during the War of 1812. It is thought that there may be as many as 500 bodies buried in unmarked military graves in this area.

Modern day forensics allows us to learn more about the casualties buried in this Burlington burial site. Support from Burlington's Division for Historic Preservation, and a grant from the National Park Service's American Battlefield Protection Program has funded research by experts to study the remains.

A bluff near Battery Park, at the edge of Lake Champlain in Burlington Vermont, served as the site of a major military base from June 1812 to June 1814. There were as many as 5000 American troops here and there was also a 300 bed military hospital. By using a technique known as oxygen isotopes, scientists can determine where people were born, where they lived as they aged, and what they ate. DNA sequencing from the twenty human remains has also been accomplished but the problem is that the scientists don't have anything to compare these results to. Additionally the DNA sample is mitochondrial DNA, which contains genetic data from the mother's side.

We have learned from the above pension affidavits that Asa Dunham died, probably in the military hospital, in Burlington Vermont on 7 October 1813. Whether he might have been one of the twenty bodies studied, or whether his remains have not been found, may never be known. It would be interesting however to pursue his identification by DNA analysis and submit this to the University of Vermont's Consulting Archaeology Program which currently holds these records.

Further information may be seen at
<http://www.sevendaysvt.com/vermont/fost-and-found/Content?oid-2140026>